

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Russia
Program Title:	Legal Systems Strengthened
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	118-0221
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$3,395,000 FSA
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$75,000 FSA
Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:	\$3,093,000 FSA
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY 2002
Year of Final Obligation:	FY 2008

Summary: USAID's program to strengthen legal systems in Russia increases public awareness of legal rights by strengthening legal protection of human rights and enhancing public relations skills of human rights organizations; increases the availability and skills of lawyers to represent citizens by supporting clinical legal education, actions to enforce women's rights (gender issues) and the advocacy skills of lawyers; and makes the Judicial System more transparent, independent, and efficient, through exchanges between Russian and American judicial officials on judicial education, ethics, court administration, and the implementation of jury trials.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2004 Program:

Legal Reform and Advocacy (\$3,008,000 FSA, \$75,000 FSA carryover). USAID's work with the judiciary will pay special attention to developing the capacity of Russian organizations. USAID's judicial reform activities will focus on judicial education and administration by funding exchanges between Russian and American judicial officials and building the capacity of Russian institutions such as the Judicial Department, the Academy of Justice, the Supreme Qualifying Collegium (SQC) and Council of Judges. These activities will be implemented in part through cooperative relationships with U.S. institutions such as the National Judicial College and the International Judicial Relations Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States. After a successful pilot court program to encourage innovative case management and court administration procedures for possible nationwide replication, USAID is designing a follow-on program to fund assistance on carefully targeted aspects of judicial administration, court management and judicial ethics. Key members of the Russian judiciary will be trained in the application of judicial ethics norms, and publications on these topics for judicial audiences, as well as the public, will be distributed.

The legal reform program also will continue to promote new forms of legal education, and legal bar partnerships between American and Russian legal communities. These activities will continue to build constituencies for legal reform outside of the government and professionalize the legal community. Technical assistance and training that started in 2003 will continue to support the Russian Government's decision to implement jury trials nationwide.

USAID will continue its human rights program to develop the advocacy skills of civil society organizations (CSOs), improve the image of human rights CSOs among the general public, and provide access to justice through human rights law clinics. The grantees will continue this work in a total of 35 regions of Russia. Principal contractors/grantees include the American Bar Association Central and Eastern Europe Law Institute (ABA/CEELI) (prime), International Memorial (prime), Moscow Helsinki Group (prime) and new partners to be determined.

Program support (\$387,000 FSA). These funds will cover training, evaluations, studies, invitational travel and related program management costs.

FY 2005 Program:

Land Reform and Advocacy (\$2,800,000 FSA). USAID plans to continue funding for the new activity to be launched in FY 2004. It will include a component, based upon success in promoting clinical legal education, to improve the education of Russia's future lawyers to play their role under the adversarial legal system now in place. It will also support selected elements of judicial partnerships, particularly judicial ethics and court administration training. The new activity will focus on spreading best practices throughout Russia and especially the Russian Far East in particular areas through adoption by the relevant national judicial authorities. Principal partners and grantees: same as above.

Program support (\$293,000 FSA). These funds will cover training, evaluations, studies, invitational travel and related program management costs.

Performance and Results: Only ten years ago, the framework for a modern legal system was virtually non-existent in Russia. The judiciary was totally subjugated to, and dependent on, the executive branch of government. The framework of a modern legal system is largely in place today, and the judicial and legal systems play a far more important role in decision-making than formerly. USAID's assistance to the development of the judicial branch and to the legal profession has played a significant role in stimulating this development. There remain problems with selective prosecution, pressures on the judiciary that hold back its independence, and uneven application of laws and enforcement of judicial decisions.

USAID's programs have helped to empower the judiciary to push for further judicial reform. The Russian Council of Judges was more effective in formulating the needs of the judiciary and lobbying for fulfilling them. In USAID pilot courts, key innovations were introduced with the active support of the federal-level officials who set standards for the whole court system. Such innovations include random case assignment to judges; use of new law clerk positions to improve customer service; and expansion of the clerk's office's working hours to better serve the public. Judicial salaries have risen substantially, and the government has adopted an ambitious plan for increased funding for the courts through 2006, but allegations of corruption plague the system. The SQC introduced transparency for the first time into the critical process of disciplining errant judges, and published a report summarizing cases in which it removed judges from office. The Russian Council of Judges published a new draft Code of Ethics for Russian judges incorporating advice that the Council had actively sought from U.S. judges. The Code is expected to be adopted by the All-Russia Congress of Judges in 2004.

USAID's human rights activities with the Moscow Helsinki Group carried out multi-functional support of human rights CSOs in 26 regions. A network of 50 local legal clinics was created and a coalition network of 41 regional organizations was created to conduct joint public campaigns and protect social interests. CSOs in three regions strengthened their public image and advocacy capabilities. As a result of this project 186 cases were filed in courts (and 92% favorably resolved); 438 cases are ready to be filed in court; and 90 publications on forced migration problems were issued.